

Meet the REAL Joe Black!



I am very pleased to be a part of the Saskatchewan Apprenticeship and Trade Certification Commission (SATCC) team and would like to take

this opportunity to introduce myself.

Most recently, I was the Executive Director of the Manitoba Apprenticeship Branch since 2003. From 1997 to 2003, I was Director of Apprenticeship for the Province of Nova Scotia. The early years of my career included working in a variety of industrial and construction settings through which I earned a Certificate of Qualification in the Powerline Technician trade. Raised on beautiful Cape Breton Island, I also earned diplomas in lobster cooking and kitchen parties. Hopefully, I will have opportunities to show off my skills in these areas of expertise.

As I later explored different professional opportunities, I complemented my trade certification with academic studies and earned a Bachelor of Arts Degree, a Bachelor of Education Degree and a Master of Education Degree. Part of my career path also included being an instructor and senior administrator in the Nova Scotia Community College system.

Since starting my work with Apprenticeship in 1997, I have been very active with the Canadian Council of Directors of Apprenticeship (CCDA) and have participated on, and chaired, many national committees.

My passion in apprenticeship is to assist and support apprentices and trades qualifiers to secure certification in their chosen trades. Essential Skills, Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR), and the development of high quality standards and training have been

key areas of focus during my tenure in Manitoba and Nova Scotia.

Saskatchewan's apprenticeship system is well regarded and respected throughout Canada. In my brief time at the Commission, I have already noted the dedication, competence, and friendliness of Commission staff. The Commission has accomplished much over the past eight years under Bob Guthrie's leadership and I will continue to move the current initiatives forward, while exploring opportunities for new initiatives. My immediate goal is to get to know all of the players in the system. I would like to have the opportunity for one on one meetings with each staff member and will start to arrange these meetings immediately. It will take a little time to get to know all of the stakeholders in Saskatchewan apprenticeship, but I will also engage in that process immediately.

I eagerly look forward to meeting all of you and our partners and stakeholders. Together, we will work to grow and enhance the apprenticeship system in Saskatchewan.

What is AEPS?

AEPS stands for the Apprenticeship Employment in the Public Sector. In the past, the public sector employers of Saskatchewan have relied on attractive wages, benefits and working conditions to draw qualified journeypersons from smaller private sector firms. The Government of Saskatchewan saw a need to address the inequity this implies and contracted Wayne McElree, a private consultant, to prepare a report of the current situation and suggest a path forward. Mr. McElree's report was released in January 2007 and the Commission joined him in an education campaign for public sector employers over the next nine months.

The findings of the study were quite stark. Among 22 of the largest employers, only about one-half had any apprentice positions at all and three of those employers (typically utility Crowns) accounted for some 84 per cent of apprentices in the system. Overall, the ratio of employed journeypersons to employed apprentices was nearly 11:1. That is, only 1 in 10 certified trades workers has the responsibility of mentoring an apprentice.

The report suggests a modest goal of three journeypersons for every apprentice in the public sector. This would boost the number of indentured apprentices by some 430 and reduce the pressure on other employers to prepare these workers for the trade. The report also suggested some innovative ways of recruiting for these positions within the terms of collective bargaining agreements and also looked at a shared funding model.

The implementation plan is now moving to the next stage with mid-level managers and human resources personnel in each organization being asked to consider how the model would fit with their organizations and/or in their ministry. The Commission is leading this second stage of education and is also offering to work out flexible training options when the need is identified.

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Plumber and Steamfitter-Pipefitter Trades Changes

Effective March 1, 2008, the terms of apprenticeship for the plumber and steamfitter-pipefitter trades are being reduced from five years/9,000 hours to four years/7,200 hours. This change will affect the industry in a number of ways:

- Existing apprentices who have completed level four training, passed the interprovincial "Red Seal" journeyman exam, and have accumulated a total of four years/7,200 hours of experience as of March 1, 2008, will be eligible to receive their journeyman certificate.
- Apprentices presently registered, and any new person indenturing as an apprentice, will be able to complete their apprenticeship programs in four years/7,200 hours.
- Our current ratio pilot, which eliminates final level apprentices

from the journeyman to apprentice ratio calculation, will be applied to year four apprentices commencing March 1, 2008.

- Certain adjustments to apprentice wages may be required. Apprentices are paid a percentage of the rate of a newly qualified journeyman at their place of work, which may be adjusted from time to time.

All apprentices who have been identified as eligible to receive their journeyman certificates as a result of this change have received a form to complete and return to the Commission. It is the apprentice's responsibility to complete and return this form. We will begin issuing certificates after March 1, 2008 when the changes are brought into effect.

Women in Non-Traditional Trades

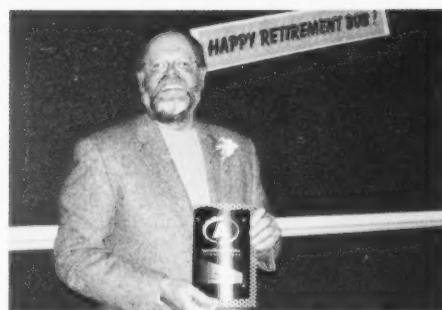
The Commission recently completed a study of the status of women in male-dominated trades. By researching past and present trends, interviewing women actually working in these trades and referencing successful programs in a number of jurisdictions, our Research Officer, Jennifer Scullen, has drafted a position paper and made several recommendations for moving forward.

Several challenges face women entering male-dominated trades. These include socialization factors, recruitment and hiring practices and resistant workplace environments. There are several instances in which a concerted effort by employers, workers and institutions has resulted in positive change. These include the *Women Building Futures* project in Edmonton and SIIT's *Women in Trades* programs.



Elizabeth Aldous, welder
Outstanding New Journeyman, 2007

The study has generated interest from the Representative Workforce Committee of the Commission Board and has been referenced in radio media reports. A proposal from the Board would see this initiative shared with the Construction Sector Council in the near future. A next step will include identifying short and medium-term deliverables and identifying associated resources from the Commission's perspective.



Bob Guthrie Retired!

Bob Guthrie retired December 7, 2007, after eight years at the helm of the SATCC. Bob was appointed CEO shortly after the Commission was created in October 1999.

Prior to SATCC CEO, he worked with the former Provincial Apprenticeship Board on an apprenticeship renewal initiative. That process led to the creation of the Commission as an industry-led public and private sector partnership.

He began his career in trades in 1975 as a building contractor, and served in various roles, including labour market planner and trades training manager.

Apprenticeship has emerged as a vital part of the post-secondary education and training system. Since the creation of the Commission, 8,648 journeymen have been certified in Saskatchewan and five new trades have been designated. Skilled trades are growing as a first-choice career for young people, and Aboriginal people have taken a prominent place in Saskatchewan's skilled trades workforce.

Bob attributes the success of the apprenticeship program to the commitment of industry and board members, as well as the hard work and dedication of Commission staff. He wishes his colleagues and all apprenticeship partners continued success with the program.

2007 Apprenticeship Awards

Forty-seven new journeypersons were recognized for their outstanding achievement in the skilled trades at the seventh annual Outstanding New Journeyperson awards held on Friday, October 26, 2007. They were the top achievers from among the nearly 1,200 new journeypersons certified in the 50 trades in Saskatchewan between July 1, 2006 and June 30, 2007.

Eleven industry associations also provided scholarships or awards recognizing outstanding journeyperson achievement in 12 trades. In addition, eight apprentices were recognized for achieving gold medals in the provincial Skills Canada competitions in Saskatoon in June 2007.



Left to right: Warren McCall, Brad Zerr, Paul McLellan (SATCC Board Chair)

Part of the ceremony included recognition through the Artisan Award - a special award to recognize outstanding contribution to the apprenticeship system. It is only awarded to an individual who has made a significant impact to the benefit of apprentices and journeypersons. The Artisan Award was presented to Brad Zerr, a Welder Trade Board member and Chair, Welder Curriculum and Examination Development Board member, and senior marker for the Welder Trade Examining Board.

Over the years, Brad Zerr was the driving force behind the thorough review of the welder apprenticeship training program and certification processes. His dedication to attend meetings and willingness to assist the Commission in any way he could made him an asset to everyone in the trade. He is an outstanding example of a

dedicated board member and industry volunteer, and was instrumental in ensuring Saskatchewan standards mirrored national standards. The result of Brad's initiatives was a fully updated training and certification system in Saskatchewan. As a result, Saskatchewan's interprovincial certified apprentices continue to be recognized nationally as some of the most valued welders working in industry today.

Over the seven year history of the annual apprenticeship awards, the Artisan Award has been presented to only three other individuals. Ron Chyz received the award in 2004 for his eclectic support in the Crane and Hoist Trade. Marion Schultz received the award in 2005 for successfully combining the barber stylist and cosmetologist trades into the hairstylist trade. Sharon Chuka received the award in 2006 for dedicating 35 years to support the apprenticeship system.

Interest in the skilled trades has been on the rise. Increased awareness of the great career opportunities available in the skilled trades coupled with an economic boom and retiring baby boomers, has resulted in unprecedented growth in the trades. The total number of apprentices registered rose to 6,779 in 2006-07, up from 5,915 in 2005-06, a 14.6 per cent increase.

"The growing number of young people choosing skilled trades careers is encouraging news for our province," said Paul McLellan, Saskatchewan Apprenticeship and Trade Certification Commission (SATCC) Board Chair. "Youth and parents are recognizing the great career opportunities that the trades offer, and employers are recognizing the benefits skilled workers make to their productivity and competitiveness. New programs like Saskatchewan Youth Apprenticeship continue to build momentum."

SYA Update...

The Saskatchewan Youth Apprenticeship (SYA) Program was established as a pilot project in the 2004-05 school year. The program was offered at one high school in Saskatchewan and had 54 students participating in the program. The pilot project carried on into the 2005-06 school year, with five more schools enrolled and participating in the pilot program. Through the six schools taking part, a total of 171 students were participating in the program.

Saskatchewan Apprenticeship and Trade Certification Commission officially announced the development and promotion of the SYA program in the 2006-07 school year. During that school year, a total of 87 schools enrolled in the SYA program and a total of 1,964 grade 10-12 students participated in the program.

Currently, there are 109 schools within Saskatchewan that are enrolled and are participating in the SYA program with 2,073 grade 10-12 students registered.

Throughout the years that the program has been operating, 405 students have completed the SYA program. Of these students, 18 have registered as Saskatchewan apprentices.

Calendar of Events

- The 2008 High School to Apprenticeship Handbook has been sent to all Saskatchewan high schools. Visit www.saskapprenticeship.ca | publications for an electronic copy, or call 1-877-363-0536.
- The 2008 Canadian Apprenticeship Forum (CAF) conference "Apprenticeship – Our Competitive Advantage" will be held in Victoria, British Columbia from June 8-10, 2008.

Profiling our Partners

This section of our newsletter provides information on one of our partners and how they interact with the Commission. This time we profile the Consumers' Co-operative Refinery Ltd (CCRL).

The Consumers' Co-operative Refinery was established in 1934 as a way to supply local co-operative associations with quality petroleum products and bring the profits of the refining phase of the petroleum industry back to the end user of the products. The refinery began operation on May 27, 1935 as a 500 barrel-per-day (bpd) skimming plant. From this humble beginning, the co-operative has grown to be a major force in refining on the prairies, processing 100,000 barrels per day of crude oil, with a proposed expansion to increase that capacity by 30 per cent over the next five years. CCRL is a wholly-owned subsidiary of Federated Co-operatives Ltd (FCL) of Saskatoon, the umbrella organization for most retail co-ops throughout the West, and through FCL, CCRL is ultimately owned by the individual members of those co-ops.

CCRL's first core principle is to "Ensure the safety of all personnel and the public at large." To meet this goal, CCRL invests a considerable amount of its training resources in safety training and certification. However, it also has several apprenticeable trades positions including crane operators, electricians, industrial instrumentation mechanics, industrial mechanics, insulators, pipefitters

and welders. In the past, CCRL has indentured crane operators, electricians and industrial instrumentation mechanics, while maintaining a substantial in-house training program for trades positions that do not require journey person accreditation. Some of CCRL's internal graduates have gone on to successfully challenge the journey person examination. More recently, CCRL has also indentured industrial mechanic apprentices and is making plans for replacement of retiring tradespersons.

In addition to a core group of maintenance trades employees, CCRL has a need for a substantial workforce of up to 1,000 temporary workers during plant shutdowns in the spring of each year. During shutdowns, temporary crane operators, pipefitters, welders, industrial mechanics and other skilled workers are hired at the CCRL plant in order to complete shutdown routines in a timely fashion.

The proposed expansion of refining capacity to 130,000 barrels per day is planned for the 2008-11 period, pending FCL Board approval, and if approved, will bring a temporary construction workforce of up to 1,800 workers to the site. The Commission is collaborating with CCRL, the Ministry of Advanced Education, Employment and Labour and the Ministry of Energy and Resources in order to identify innovative means to recruit and train the necessary workers.

For general information about the Consumers' Co-operative Refinery visit their website at <http://www.ccrl-fcl.ca/index.htm>.

New Faces

- Jacques Austin - term Field Consultant in La Ronge until May 2, 2008
- Sherrylin Matychuk - Training Coordinator in Regina effective October 29, 2007

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